

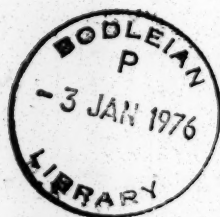
RELATION
OF THE
FEARFUL ESTATE
OF
Francis Spira.

In the Year 1548.

Compiled by Nath. Bacon, Elq.

*The backsliders in heart shal be filled with his own ways
Prov. 14. 14.*

L O N D O N,
Printed by H. B. and are to be sold by
Andrew Kembe on St. Margarets
hill in Southwarke. 1662.





A P R E F A C E.

FOr truth of this Historie ensuing, besides circumstances of place, person, time, occasion, so exactly observed: I refer my self to the Relation of those Godly men, who in several Languages have manifested to the world the several passages thereof: and although I am not ignorant, that at the first they were not onely not credited, but also discredited and slandered, by such as found them to bee a

A Preface.

Blas to the *Romane* Profession,
yet they lost not their lustre
thereby, but being acquitted
by many Compurgators of se-
veral Nations, and some of the
Romish Religion, being all of
them spectators of this Trage-
dy. it occasioned not only a fur-
ther manifestation & confirma-
tion of the truth, but also a large
and more frequent confluence,
to see that which they had for-
merly only heard of. This part-
ly appeareth out of the suc-
ceeding Story: but more fully
out of a *Apologie* written by
Vergerius Bishop of *Justinople*,
who was accused for dispersing
the same of his example to
the stain of Popery, in which
Apologie to *N. Roman.* Suffra-
gan of *Padua*, is shortly and
plainly declared, what was
said, what was done, and who
were

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were present. If that it bee demanded; what moved me to compile this Treatise . *spira*, tell them that it should teach fear and reverence, and indeed among all those that come to see him, few or none returns unshaken *Vergerius* in his first Epistle saith : I would fain go see him again, but I exceedingly fear and tremble ; and in his Apology saith, it is such a rare example, as I would willingly go to the furthest parts of the world to hear or see the like. The Ladie *Jane* to her Fathers Chaplain (that had fallen into *spira's* sin) saith, Remember the lamentable estate of *spira*. I acknowledge that there hath been formerly a Book published in our Mother tongue , concerning this subject, but as far as I can learn.

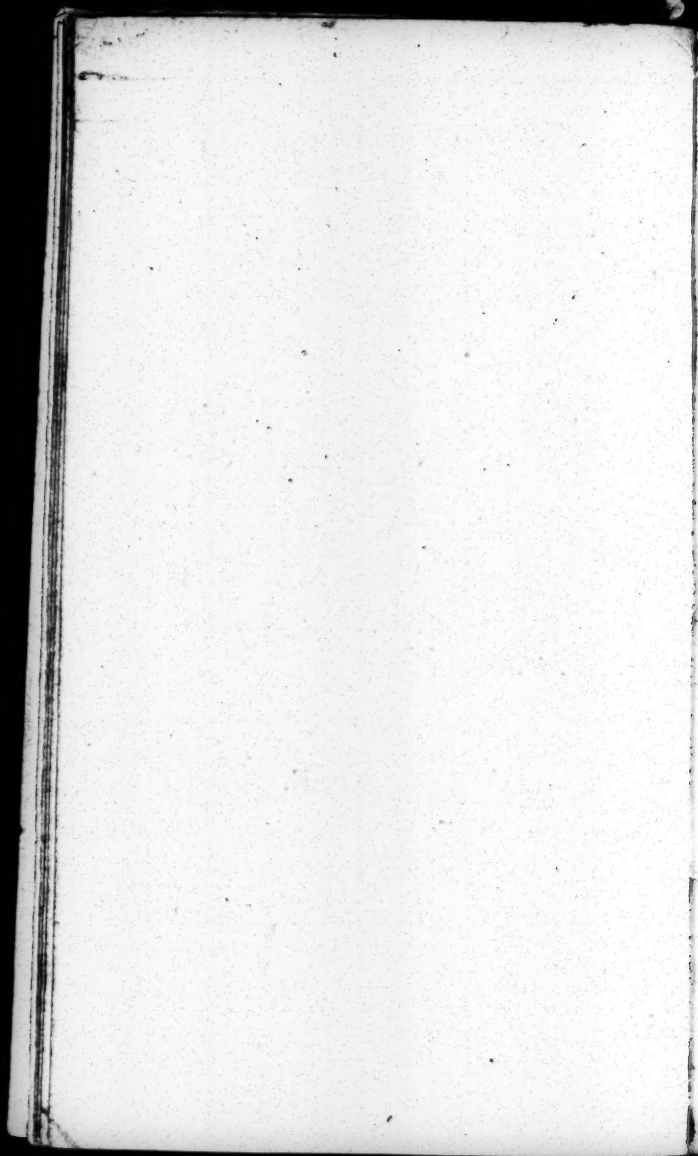
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learn (for I could never yet obtain any of them) it was nothing so large and various as this present Treatise, and as I have heard, a translation of onely one of the Tractates from whence I have gathered this present discourse in part. Concerning my care and fidelitie in this businesse, it is such, as I may truly say without changing of colour, that there is not one sentence of all this Work attributed unto the person of Spira, but it hath its Warrant, either from the Epistles of *Vergerius* and *Criban'dus*, Professors of the Law at *Padua*, or from the discourses of *Henry Stringer* a Scottish man, *Sigismund Gelons* a Transilvanian, and *Mart. Bocha* a Devine of *Basil*; neither have I taken any other

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other libertie then as a relation
to weave the foresaid Dis-
courses one within another, so
as those which under several
Writers were before counted
several, are now by my in-
deavours reduced into one in-
tire Historie, connexed by
due succession of time and oc-
casion, as punctually as could
be aimed at, by the circum-
stances noted in the Writings
of those holy and learned men
before named.

N. B.




*To the { Author
&
Reader } of this Historie.*

Some scattered parcels of this Story lay
In Forraign Papers; which had't not found a way
Thus to collect, had { been obvious prey,
Never seen the day.

Reader would't see how sinning against the light,
Will quench, and leave the soul in a sad night
Of discontents. Come hither Reader then, look here
And learn light quenching sins to fear.

Reader would't see the comfort breathing Spirit
To grieve, What curselesse grief it doth deserit?
Come hither then, look here.

Here see a soul that's all despair; A man
All Hell, a spirit all one wound: who can
A wounded spirit hear?

Reader would't see (what maist thou never feel)
Despairs, Rack, Tortures, whips of burning heel?
Come then, look here.

Behold

Behold this man, this furnace, in whose heart
Sin hath created Hell. Oh, in each part

What flames appear!

His thoughts all stings, words swords, brimstone his
Breath:

His sight flames, wishes curses, life a death:

A thousand deaths live in him, he not dead,

A breathing curse in living-scalding lead:

And yet he, lives our Monuments, to tell

How black are quenched lights;

Quencht joys are double frights,

Black dyes are double nights;

Heaven tasted, list a double Hell,

I have call'd thee Reader, pray so be,

Read this, that others need not thee.

Legas Historiam,

Ne fias Historia.

MN

Extra:



EXtraordinary Examples
of divine Justice, GOD
never intended for a
nine dayes wonder; else would
he, when he exemplified *Lots*
wife, have turned her into a
statue of melting snow, not
of lasting salt; which stood,
as *Josephus* tels us, till his age,
after the destruction of *Jeru-*
salem; and as some Travellers
report, till at this day: *ut quod-*
dam hominibus præstaret condi-
mentum, quo sapiant unde illud
caveatur exemplum: Aug. de
abn. lib. 16. cap. 30. for
a season against corruption, a
preservative against Apostacy.
This Tragedie, when fresh and
new, was the conversion and
confirmation of sundry Wor-
shippers:

thies *Vergerius*, a dayly Spectator thereof, forsaking a rich Bishoprick of *Justinopolis*, and tents of Antichrist, went to *Basil* and dyed a worthy protestant: many Nations had Eye-witnesses of their own Students then in the University of *Padua* Who penned the story, the Copies whereof are frequently revived; our English ones were very defective, and now worn out of shops and hands; sundry Manuscripts of this abroad, imperfect; which moved me to compare this labour of a worthy Gentleman (who faithfully translated it out of Italian, French &c. Letters) with the *Latine* of *Caelius Secundus, Curio, Matthæus Gribaudus*, professors of the Civill Law in *Padua* : *Sigismund Gelous* a *Transylvanian*,
Henricus

Henricus scotus, all daily visi-
 tors of *Spira*, and find it ac-
 cord with them Touching
Spira's person, I find most
 learned Writers do incline to
 the right! and hepefull hand;
 moved by his sweet, humble
 and charitatable speeches; some
 few desparate ones excepted
 that fell from him in some little
 agonies which kept him fast-
 ing and watching about six
 moneths space, eating nothing
 but what was forced down his
 throat. The summe of *Calvins*
 and *Borrhaus* their counsels * is,
 that all learn to take heed of
 backsliding, which Gods soul
 abhors, and not to dally with
 Conscience, and hell no earth,
 if justly incensed; more to be
 feared then the Spanish Inqui-
 sition, or all the Strappadoes
 and torments in the world

* who
 waite large-
 ly of the use
 of this pat-
 tern.

and to take heed of *Spira's* principall Errors: which were, to dispute with Satan over-buslie in time of weaknesse; especially to reason, and conclude from present sense, to Gods past Reprobation, and future Damnation: both which is hard, if possible, for any man to determine in his own, much more in others cases; so commending thee to his grace, who is able to establish thee to the end: I bid thee farewell, and hope well, while the space of Grace lasteth, *Dum spiras, spera*; so mayest thou take good and no hurt, by the reading of this terrible Example.



A
RELATION
of the fearfull e-
state of *Francis*
SPIRA.



IN the year, 1548
when the glorious
Sun of the Gospel
was but newly
risen in *Europe*; in
the days of the reign of *Edward*,
the Sixth of that name, King of
ENGLAND, in the
Territorie, and under the
Jurisdiction of the City of
Venice, being the very border
of *Italy*, in the town of *Città*

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della, lived one Francis Spira, a civil Lawyer, an Advocate of great rank and esteem, being of known learning, and eloquence, of great experience of carriage circumspect and severe, his speech grave and composed, his countenance sharp and austere, every way befitting that authority whereunto he was advanced, endowed with outward blessings, of wife and eleven children, and wealth in abundance. what his worst parts were, I have no other warrant then his own words, which (if not tainted overmuch with the bitterness of a desperate mind, and bearing a countenance rather of passion then of sober confession) may seem to add a period to all further commendations.

*"I was (saith he) excessive-
"ly covetous of mony, and ac-
"cordingly I applyed my self to
"get by injustice, corrupting ju-
"stice by deceit, inventing tricks
"to delude justice; good causes
"I either defended deceitfully, or
"sold them to the adversary per-
"fidiously; ill causes I mainteined
"with all my might; I willing-
"ly opposed the known truth,
"and the trust committed unto
"me, I either betrayed or per-
"verted. Thus having worn
out forty four Yeares, or
thereabouts, and the news
of the new, or rather newly
revived Opinions of Luther
coming into those parts, re-
presented an object of novelty
unto him; who being as de-
sirous to know, as he was fa-
mous for knowledge, suffered
not these wandring opinions to*

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pass unexamined; but teaching into the Scriptures, and into all bookes of Controversie that he could get, both old and new, and finding more then same or opinion, he began to taste their nature so well, as he entertaines, loves, and owne them at length; and with such zeal, as he became a professor, yea a teacher of them; first to his wife, children, and family; and after to his friends, and familiar acquaintance, and in comparision, seem'd to neglect all other affaires, intending ever to presse this main point, that *We must wholly, and onely depend on the free and unchangeable love of GOD in the death of Christ, as the onely sure way to salvation*: and this was the summe of all his discourse - and this continued for the space
of

estate of Francis Spira

of six yeares, or thereabouts, even so long as this fire could keep it selfe within private walls, but at length, it brake forth into publick meetings. so as the whole Province of *padua* dawned by the lustre thereof. The Clergy finding the trade of their pardons to decay, and their Purgatory to wax cold, began to bestirre themselves; glossing their actions, first, which calumnious aspersions upon the whole profession; then more plainly striking at *Spira* with grievous accusation, And to effect their purpose, some promise labour: others favour, some advice, others maintenance: all join to divide, either his soul from his body, or both from God.

Now was *John Cosa*, the Popes Legate, resident at *Venice*,

nice, being by birth a *Florentine*: and one that wanted neither malice against those of this way, nor craftinesse to effect his malicious purposes, To him these men repair with out-cries against *Spira*, that he was the man that condemned the received rights of the Church; deluded the Ecclesiasticall power, and scandalized the policy thereof; one of no mean rank; being a man of account and authority and thereunto learned in the Scriptures, elegant in speech; and in one word, a dangerous *Lutheran*; having also many disciples, and therefore not to be despised.

At this began the *Legate* to cast his eye on the terrible alteration that lately had happened in *Germany*; wheere, by the means

means of one onely *Luther*, the Romish Religion had suffered such a blow, as that it could neither be cured by dissimulation, nor defended by power: but the Clergy must either mend their manners, or lose their dignities; on the other side, when he saw how propense the common people, inhabiting in the bordering Country of *Italy*, were to entertain those new opinions, he now thought it no time to dispute or perswade, but with speed repairs to the *Senate*, and procures authority from them to send to *Spira*.

Spira by this time had considered with himself of the nature of his courage, how evident and notorious it was, and therefore subject to be envied by such, as neither liked his

A relation of a fearful

his person nor religion ; he
perceived that his opinions
were neither retired, nor spe-
culative, but such as aimed at
the overthrow of the *Romish*
Faction, and a change of po-
licy ; and that his enemies
wanted neither power nor oc-
casion, to call him to an account
in publick when he must ei-
ther *Apostatize*, and shamefully
give his former life, yea his
own conscience, the lye, or en-
dure the utmost malice of his
deadly enemies ; or forsake
his wife, children, friends,
goodes, authority : yea his
dear Country ; and betake
himself to a forraign people,
there to endure a thousand
miseries, that do continually
wait upon a voluntary exile.

Being .

being thus distracted, and tossed in the restless waves of doubt, without guide to trust to or heaven to fly to for succor; on the suddain, GOD'S Spirit assisting, he felt a calm, and began to discourse with himselfe, in this manner.

Why wandrest thou thus in uncertainties, unhappy man; cast away fear put on thy shield, the shield of faith, Where is thy wounded courage, thy goodnesse, thy constancy; remember that Christs glory lies at the stake: suffer thou without fear & he wil defend thee he wil tel thee What thou shalt answer; he can beat down all danger. bring thee out of prison, raise thee from the dead; consider Peter in a dungeon, the Martyrs in the fire; if thou makest a good confess on thou maist indeed go to prison, or death but an eternall reward in heaven remains

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remains for thee; What hast thou in this world comparable to Eternall life to everlasting happiness? if thou doest otherwise, think of the scandal; (common people live by example, thinking whatever is done is wel done;) fear the loss of peace and joy, fear hell, death, and eternall wrath, or if thy flesh be so strong, as to cause thee to doubt of the issue fly thy Countrey, get thee away, though never so far rather then deny the Lord of life.

Now was Spira in reasonable quiet, being resolved to yield to these waighty reasons. yet holding it wisdom to examine all things he consults also with flesh and blood; thus the battel doth renew, and the flesh begins in this manner; Be well advised, fond man, consider reasons on both sides.

sides, and then judge : how canst thou then overween thine own sufficiency, as thou neither regardst the examples of thy Progenitors, nor the Judgement of the whole Church; dost thou not consider, what misery this thy rashness wil bring thee unto? thou shalt lose all thy substance, gotten with so great care and travell, thou shalt undergo to the most exquisite torments that malice it self can devise; thou shalt bee counted an Heretick of all, and to close up all, thou shalt dye shamefully. What thinkest thou of the loathsome stinking dungeon, the bloody axe, the burning fagot? are they delightful? Be wise at length, and keep thy life and honour; thou mayest live do do much good to good men as God commands thee; thou mayest be an ornament to thy Countrey,

and

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and put case, the Countries losse
would be of small esteem with
thee; Wilt thou bring thy friends
also into danger; thou hast be-
gotten children wilt thou now cut
their throats, and inhumanely
butcher them, which may in time
bring honour to their Country,
glory to God, help and further-
ance to his Church; go to the
Legat, weak man, freely confesse
thy fault, and help all these
miseries. Thus did the cares
of this World and the decent-
fulnesse of riches, choake the
good Seed that was formerly
sown: so as fearing, hee
faints, and yelds unto the al-
lurements of this present
world, and being thus blinded
he goes to the Legat at Venice,
and salutes him with this
newes.

*Having for these divers
yeares*

years entertained an opinion concerning some Articles of faith, contrary to the Orthodox, and received judgment of the Church, and uttered many things against the authority of the Church of Rome, and the universall Bishop. I humbly acknowledge my fault and error, and my folly in misleading others I therefore yeeld my selfe in all obedience, to the Supream Bishop, into the Bosome of the Church of Rome; never to depart again from the traditions and decrees of the holy See. I am heartly sorry for what is past and I humbly beg pardon for so great an offence.

The Legat preceiving Spira to faint, he persues him to the utmost; he causes a recitation of all his Errors to be drawn in Writing, together with

with the Confession annexed to it. And commands *Spira* to subscribe his name there, which accordingly he did, then the Legate commands him to return to his own Town: and there to declare this confession of his, and to acknowledge the whole Doctrine of the Church of Rome, to be holy, and true, and to adjure the Opinions of *Luther* and other such Teachers; as false, and Hereticall; *Man knows the beginning of sinne, but who bounds the issues thereof?* *Spira* having once lost footing, goes down amain, he cannot stay nor gain-say the Legate: but promiseth to accomplish his whole will and pleasure: he soon addresseth himself for his Journey: and being onward in the way, he
thinks

think himsele of the large spoils he had brought away, from the conflict with the *Legate* ; what glorious testimony he had given of his great faith, and constancy in Christ's cause : and to bee plain how impiously he had denied Christ, and his Gospel at *Venice* : and what he promised to do further in his own Countrey ; and thus partly with fear, and partly with shame being confounded, he thought hee heard a voyce speaking unto him, in this manner.

Spira, *What dost thou here ? whither goest thou ? hast thou, unhappy man, given thy hand writing to the Legate at Venice ? yet see thou dost not seal it in thy own Countrey. Dost thou indeed think eternall life so mean,*

mean, as that thou preferrest this present life before it? dost thou well in referring wife and children before Christ? is the windy applause of the people, better indeed then the glory of god? and the possession of this Worlds good more deare to thee, then the salvation of thine owne soul? is the small use of a moment of time more desirable then eternall wrath is dreadfull? Think with thy self, what Christ endured for thy sake; is it not equall, thou shouldst suffer somewhat for him? Remember man that the sufferings of this present life, are not comparable to the glory that shall be revealed. If thou sufferest with him: thou shalt also reign with him: thou canst not answer for what thou hast already done; neverthelesse, the gate of mercy is not quite shut: take heed
that

that thou heapest not sin upon sin
least thou repent when it will be
too late.

Now was *spira* in a wilder-
nesse of doubt, not knowing
which way to turn him, nor
what to do; yet being arri-
ved in his own Country, and
amongst his friends, what
he had done and what he had
further promised to do; and
how the terror of God on the
one side, and the terror of this
world on the other side, did
continually rack him; and
therefore he desired of them
advice in this so doubtfull a
case, his friends, upon small
deliberation answered, that it
was requisite he should take
heed that he did not in any
wise betray his wife and chil-
dren, and all his friends into
danger

danger, seeing, that by to make
a matter as the reciting of a
little Schedule, which might
be done in lesse space then
half an hour, he might both
free himself from present dan-
ger, and preserve many that
depend upon him ; adding
moreover, that he could get
no credit in relenting from
that which he had already in
greatest part performed be-
fore the *Legate* at *Venice*, and
that in the perfect accomplish-
ing thereof, little or no discre-
dite could arise, more then
what by the former action al-
ready he had sustained ; on
the other side, if he did not
perform his promise made to
the *Legate*, he could neither
discharge himselfe of the
shame which he had already
incurred ; nor avoid farther
more

more heavy and in supportable injuries, then probably hee should have injured, if he had persisted obstinately in his former Opinions.

This was the last blow of the battie; and *Spira* utterly overcome, goes to the *Prætor*, and profers to performe his promise made to the *Legate* who in the mean time, had taken order to have all things ready, and had sent the instrument of abjuration signed by *Spira*, to the *Prætor*, by the hands of a certain Priest. All that night the miserable man wares out with restless cares, without any minute of rest, the next morning being come, he gets up, and being ready, he desperately enters into the publick Congregation, where Mass being finished, in the presence

presence of friends and enemies, and of the whole Assembly; being by estimation near two thousand people; yea and of Heaven it self, he recites that infamous abjuration word for word as it was written, it being done he was fined at thirty pieces of gold, which he presently paid, five whereof were given to the Priest that brought the abjuration, the other twenty five were imployed towards the making of a *Skryne* to put the *Eucharist* in; then was he sent home, restored to his Dignities goods, wife and children, No sooner was he departed, but he thought he heard a dreadful voice saying to him? *Thou wicked wretch thou hast denied me, thou hast renounced the covenant of thy obedience, thou hast*
broken

broken thy vow, hence Apostate,
bear with thee the sentence of thy
eternall damnation; he trem-
bling and quaking in body and
minde, fell down in a swoond;
relif was at hand for the bo-
dy, but from that time for-
ward he never found any peice
or ease of minde, but continu-
ing in uncessant torments, he
professed that he was captived
under the revenging hand of
the great God. that he heard
continually that fearfull sen-
tence of Christ that just Judge,
that he knew he was utterly
undone; that he could neither
hope for grace nor Christ's in-
tercession with God the Father
in his behalf: thus was his fault
ever heavie on his heart, and
ever his Judgment before his
eyes.

Now began his friends
B some

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some of them, to repent too late of their rash counsell : others not looking so high as the Judgement of God, laid all the blame upon his Melancholick constitution ; that overshadowing his Judgement, wrought in him a kind of madness ; every one censured as his fancy led him, yet for remedy all agreed in this, to use both the wholesome help of Physitians, and the pious advice of Divines, and therefore thought it meet to convey him to *Padua*, an University of note, where plenty of all manner of meanes was to be had ; this they accordingly did, both with his Wife, Children, and whole family ; others also of his friends accompanying him ; and being arrived at the house of one *James Ardin*, in
Saint

Saint Leonards Parish, they sent for three Physitians of most note, who upon due observation of the effects, and of other Symptomes of his disease, and some private conference one with another, amongst themselves, returned their verdict in this manner, viz. That they could not discern that his body was afflicted with any danger or distemper originally from it self, by reason of the overruling of any humour; but that this Malady of his did arise from some griefe, or passion of his minde, which being over-burdened, did soe oppress the spirits, as they wanting free passage, stirred up many ill humours, whereof the body of man is full: and these ascending up into the braine, troubled the fancy

shadowed the seat of the judgment, and so corrupted it. this was the state of his disease, and that outworn part that was visible to the eye of nature; this they indeavoured to reform by purgation, ither to consume, or at least to diver the course of those humors from the brain, but all their skill effected nothing, which Spira noting, said: *Alas poor man how far wide are you? do you think that this disease is to be cured by potions? believ me there must be another manner of medicine, it is neither plaisters, nor drugs, that can help a fainting soul cast down with sense of sin, and the wrath of God, 'tis onely Christ that must bee the Physitian, and the Gospel the soul Awidote.*

The Physitians easily be-
lieved

lived him after they had understood the whole truth of the matter, and therefore they wished him to seek some spiritual comfort. By this time the fame of this man was spread over all *Padua*, and the neighbour Country; partly for that hee was a man of Esteeme, partly because as the disease, so the occasion was especially remarkeable; for this was not done in a corner; so as dayly there came multitudes of all sorts to see him; some out of curiosity, onely to see and discourse; some out of a pious desire to try all means that might reduce him to comfort again; or at least to benefit themselves by such a spectacle of misery, and of the justice of God. Amongst these

Paulus Vergerus Bishop of

Juſtinopolis, and *Mattheus Gri-*
baldus, deſerve eſpecially to
be named as the moſt princi-
pall labourers for this mans
comfort. Thy find him now
about fifty years of age, nei-
ther affected with the dotage
of o'd age, nor with the un-
conſtant head-ſtrong paſſion of
youth, but in the ſtrength of
his experience and judgement:
in a burning heat, calling ex-
ceſſively for drink; yet his
underſtanding active, quick
of apprehenſion, witty in diſ-
courſe above his ordinary
manner, and judiciously op-
poſite; his friends laboured
him by all fair means to receive
ſome nourishment, which hee
obſtinately gainſaying, they
forcibly infused ſome liquid
ſuſtenance into his mouth;
moſt of which he ſpit out a-
gain.

gain; exceedingly chafing, and in this fretting mood of his, said; As it is true, that all things worke for the best to those that love God, so to the wicked all are contrary; for whereas a plentiful off-spring is the blessing of God, and his reward being a stay to the weak estate of their aged parents: to me they are a cause of bitternesse and vexation: they do strive to make me tire out this misery; I would faine be at an end; I deserve not this dealing at their hands; Oh! that I were gone from hence, that some body would let out this weary soul.

His friends saluted him, and asked him, what he conceived to be the cause of his disease; forthwith he brake out into a lamentable discourse of the passages formerly related, and

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that with such passionate Elocution, that he caused many to weep, and most to tremble. They contrarily, to comfort him, propounded many of God's promises recorded in the Scripture; and many examples of God's mercy; *My sinne* (said he) *is greater then the mercy of God.* Nay, answered they the mercy of God is above all sin; God would have all men to be saved; *It's true* (quoth hee) *hee would have all that he hath elected to be saved; hee would not have damned Reprobates to be saved; I am one of that number; I know it, for I willingly and against my knowledge denied Christ: and I feel that he hardens, and wil not suffer me to hope.*

After some silence, one asked him whether hee did not believe

believe that Doctrine to be true, for which hee was accused before the Legate? he answered; *I did believe it when I denied it, but now I neither believe that, nor the doctrine of the Roman Church: I believe nothing, I have no faith, no trust, no hope; I am a Reprobate like Cain or Judas, who casting away all hope of mercy, fell into despair, and my friends doe mee great wrong, that they suffer me not to go to the place of unbelievers, as I justly deserve.*

Here they began sharply to rebuke him; requiring, and charging him, that in any wise he did not violate the mercy of God; to which hee answered; *“The mercy of God is exceeding large, and extends to all the elect; but not to me, or any like to me, who are sealed up*

'to wrath, I tell you I deserve it
 'my owa conscience condemns
 'me, what needeth any other
 'Judge? Christ came (said they)
 Rom. 2. 15. to take away sin, & calling for a
 book, they read unto him the
 Passion of Christ, and com-
 ing to his nailing to the Cross,
Spira said, " This indeed is
 'comfortable to such as are E-
 'lected, but as for me wretch,
 'they are nothing but grief and
 'torment because I contemned
 'them. Thus roaring for grief
 and tossing himselfe up and
 down upon the bed as hee lay
 he intreated them to read noe
 more; As *Gribauldus* was com-
 ming to see him, *Vergerius* said
 to *Spira*, dear Sir, here is
 Doctor *Gribauldus*, a godly &
 faithfull friend of yours, come
 to see you. " Hee is welcome
 " (said he) But he shall finde
 me

me ill; *Gribouldus* replied
Sir, this is but an illusion of
the Devill, who doth what he
can to vex you; but turn you
to God with your whole
heart andd he is ready to shew
you mercy; the Lord you
know is full of mercy, it is
he that hath said, that as often
as a sinner repents of his sin, he
will remember his sins no more.
Consider this in the Example
of Perer that was Christs fami-
liar and an Apostle, and yet
denied him thrice with an
Oath, and yet God was merci-
full. unto him: Consider
the Thief that spent his whole
life in wickednesse, and for all
that did not God graciously
respect him in the last minute
of his life? Is the Lords hand
now shortned that it cannot
save? to this *Spira* answered:

If

If Peter grieved and repented, it was because Christ beheld him with a merciful eye : and in that he was pardoned, it was not because he wept, but because God was gracious to him ; but God respects not me, and therefore I am a Reprobate ; I feel no comfort can enter into my heart, there's place there but only for torments and vexings of spirit ; I tell you my case is properly mine own, no man was ever in the like plight, and therefore my estate is fearful.

Then roaring out in the bitterness of his spirit, said, *It's a fearfull thing to fall into the hands of the living God ; the violence of his passion and action sutable, did amaze many of the beholders ; insomuch as some of them said with a whispering voyce, that he was possessed*

possessed, he over-hearing it, said, *Do you doubt it? I have a whole Legion of devils that take up their dwelling within me, and possesse me as their own. and justly too, for I have denied Christ. Whether did you that willingly or not? (said they.) That's nothing to the purpose (said Spira) Christ saith, Whosoever denies me before men, him will I deny before my Father which is in Heaven, Christ will not be denied, noe not in a word, and therefore it is enough, though in heart I never denied him.*

They observing his distemper to arise from the sense and horror of the pains of Hell, asked him whether he thought there were worse paines then what he endured for the present, he said, "That hee knew there were far worse paines then those

Psal. 1.

'those that he then suffered, for
 'the wicked shall rise to their
 'Judgement, but they shal not
 'stand in judgment; this I trem-
 'ble to think of yet doe I desire
 'nothing more then that I might
 'come to that Place where I
 'may be sure to feel the worst
 'and to bee freed from fear of
 'worse to come.

I but you are to consider (said
 one) that those Opinions for
 which you were accused before
 the *Legate*, were impious and
 therefore you are not to think
 you denyed Christ, but rather
 that you confessed him, ac-
 knowledging the infalible truth
 of the Cathelicke Church.
 'Truly (said he) when I did de-
 ny those Opinions, I did thinke
 them to bee true, and yet I did
 deny them.

Go to (said others) now
 then

then believe that they are true,
'Now I cannot (said hee) God
'will not suffer mee to believe
'them nor trust in his meroy.
'what would you have me do?
'I would faine attaine to this
'power but cannot though I
'should presently be burnt for
'it. But why do you said the o-
ther esteem this so greevius a
sin when as the Learned *Legate*
constrained you to it, which
he surely would not have done
if your former Opinions had
not been erroneous; no, good
Francis, the Devill besets thee
let not therefore the grievous-
nesse of thy sinne (if any such
be) amaze thee. 'You say right
(replied hee) the Devill hath
possest mee and God hath left
mee to his Power, for I finde
I can neither beleve the Gos-
pell nor trust in God's mercy.

A relation of the fearful

'I have sinned against the holy
 'Ghost, & God by his immuta-
 'decree hath bound me over to
 'perpetual punishment, without
 'any hope of pardon. Its true that
 'the greatness of sin or the mul-
 'titude of them, ^{do} not bind Gods
 'mercy, all those sins that in the
 'former part of my life I have
 'committed, then did not so much
 'trouble me, for I trusted God
 'would not lay them to my
 'charge. now having sin'd against
 'the holy Ghost, God hath ta-
 'ken away from me all power of
 'repentance; and brings all my
 'sins to remembrance; & guilty
 'of one, guilty of all. And there-
 'fore its no matter whether my
 'sins be great or smal, few or ma-
 'ny they be such, as Christs blood
 'nor Gods mercy belongs to me
 'God wil have mercy on whom
 'hee will have mercy; and
 whom

‘whom he will he hardneth ,
‘this is it that gnaws my heart,
‘he hath hardned me; and I
‘find that he dayly more and
‘more doth harden me, and
‘therefore I am out of hope : I
‘feel it therefore cannot but de-
‘spair. I tell you there was ne-
‘ver such a monster as I am, ne-
‘ver was any man alive a specta-
‘cle of exceeding misery. I knew
‘that justification is to be expe-
‘cted by Christ, and I denyed
‘& abjured it, to the end I might
‘keep this frail life from adver-
‘sity and my children from po-
‘verty : and now behold how
‘biter this life is to me and God
‘only knows what shal become
‘of this my family. but sure noe
‘good is likely to betide it but
‘worse and worse : and such a
‘ruine at length as one stone
‘shall not be left upon another.

But

But why should you (said Cri-
 bauldus) conceit so deeply of
 your sin, seeing you cannot but
 know, that many have denyed
 Christ, yet never fell into de-
 spair? Well (said he) I can see
 no ground of comfort for
 such, neither can I warrant
 them from Gods revenging
 hand in wrath; though it plea-
 seth God yet to suffer such to
 be in peace: and besides, there
 will a time of danger come &
 then they shall be thoroughly
 tryed; & if it were not so; yet
 God is just in making mee an
 example to others; & I cannot
 justly complaine; there is no
 punishment so great, but I have
 deserved it, for this so heinous
 offence; I assure you it is no
 smal matter to deny Christ, &
 yet it is more ordinary then
 commonly men do ^{con}ceive of
 it is not a denial made before a
 Magistrate

Magistrate as it is with me for
as often as a Christian doth
dissemble the known truth; as
often as hee approves of false
worship, by presenting him-
selfe at it, soe often as he hath
not things worthy of his cal-
ling, or such things as are ~~unworthy~~ ^{worth}
worthy of his calling, so often
he denies Christ & thus did I,
and therefore am justly pun-
ished for it. Your Estate
(quoth *Gribauldus*) is not so
strange as you make it. *Job* was
so far gone that he complained
God had set him as a marke a-
gainst him, and *David* that was
a man after Gods own heart
complained often that God
had forsaken him, and was
become his enemy yet both
received comfort again. Com-
fort your self therefore, God
will come at length though
he

A relation of the fearfull

hee now seem farre off.

O Brother (answered Spira)
I believe all this, the Devils be-
lieve and tremble; but David
was ever Elected and dearly be-
loved of God; and though hee
sel. yet God took not utterly away
his holy Spirit, and therefore
was heard when he prayed, Lord
take not thy holy Spirit from
me, but I am in another case,
being ever accursed from the pre-
sence of God; neither can I pray
as he did because his holy Spirit
is quite gone; and cannot be re-
called; and therefore I know I
shall live in continuall hardnesse
so long as I live, Oh that I might
feel but the least sense of the love
of God to me, though but for one
small moment, as I now feel his
beavy wrath that burns like the
torments of hell within mee, and
afflicts my conscience with pangs
unrite

unutterable, verily desperation
is hell it self.

Here *Gribanldus* said, I doe
verily believe *Spira*, that God
having so severely chastised you
in this life correcteth you in
mercy here that hee may spare
you hereafter and that he hath
mercy sealed up for you in time
to come.

Nay (said *Spira*) hence do I
know that I am a Reprobate, be-
cause he afflicteth me with hard-
ness of heart : O that my body
had suffered all my life long, soe
that he would be pleased to release
my soul, and ease my conscience,
this burdened Conscience.

Gribanldus being desirous to
ease his minde from the conti-
nuall meditation of his finnes
as alsoe to sound how for the
present he stood affected to the
Romish Church : asked him
what

what he thought became of the souls of men so soon a they departed out of the body ; to which he answered.

‘Although this be not so fully revealed in Scripture yet I verily believe that the soul of the Elect go presently to the Kingdome of glory & not that they sleep with the body as some do imagine:

Very well said one of the
 1 Sam. 4.9. Spectators, why do the Scriptures then say that God brings down to hell and raiseth up , seeing it cannot bee meant of the estate of the soul after death which as thou sayest either goeth to heaven without change or to hell without Redemption. it must bee understood of the Estate of the soul in this life. Like that wherein thou art at this present , and often

oftentimes wee see that God suffers men to fall into the jawes of despair; and yet raiseth them up again & therefore despair not but hope; it shal be even thus with thee in this good time

This is the work (quoth Spira) this the labour; for I tell you when I at Venice did first adjure my profession and soe as it were drew an Indenture the Spirit of God often admonished me; and when at Cittadella I did as it were set to my seal. the Spirit of God often suggested to me doe not write Spira do not seal: yet I resisted the Holy ghost and did both: and at that very present I did evidently feel a wound inflicted in my very will: soe although I can say, I wou'd believe yet can I not say I will believe. God hath denied me the power of will:

will, and it befalls me in this my miserable Estate, as with one that is fast in Irons, and his friends comming to see him, do pity his Estate, and do perswade him to shake off his fetters, and to come out of his bonds, which God knows hee would faine doe, but cannot, this is my very case, you perswade me to believe, how faine would I do it, but cannot. Onow I cannot. Then violently grasping his handes together, and raising himselfe up, Behold (said hee) I am strong, yet by little and little I do cry and consume, and my servants would faine preserve this weary life, but at length the wil of God must be done, and I shall perish miserably as I deserve. Rejoyce yee Righteous in the Lord blessed are you whose hearts the Lord hath mollified.

Then

Then after some pause It's wonderful, I earnestly desire to pray to God with my heart, yet I cannot, I see my damnation, and I know my remedy is onely in Christ, yet I cannot set myself to lay hold on it: such are the punishments of the damned; they confesse what I confesse, they repent of their loss of heaven; they cannot mend their ways.

As he was thus speaking, he observed divers flies that came about him, and some lighted on him; 'Behold, said he, now also *Be'zebub come to his banquet, you shall shortly see my end, and in me an example to many, of the Justice and Judgment of GOD,

About this time came in two Bishops, with diverse
C Scholars

Schollers of the University, one of them being *Pavlus Vergerius*, having observed *Spira* more then any other, being continually conversant with him : told him his Estate was such as rather stood in need of prayer then advice. and therefore desired him to pray with him in the Lords prayer; *Spira* consented, and he began.

[Our Father which art in heaven] then breaking forth into tears he stopped, but they said It is well your grief is a good sign. ' I bewail (said he) my misery, for I perceive I am forsaken of God and cannot call to him from my heart as I was wont to doe; yet let us go on said *Vergerius*.

Thy Kingdom come] O Lord (said *Spira*) bring me also into this kingdome; I beseech thee
shut

shut me not out. Then coming to those words [Give us this day our dayly bread] he added: 'O Lord I have enough & abundance to feed this carke of mine; but there is another bread I humbly beg, the bread of thy grace, without which I know I am but a dead man.

Lead us not into temptation;] seeing Lord that I am brought into temptation, help me; Lord that I may escape; the enemy hath overcome, help me I beseech thee to overcome this cruell Tyrant.

These things he spake with a mournful voice, the tearstrickling down abundantly; and expressing such affections & passion as turned the bowels of those there present, with grief and compunction; they then turning to *Spira* said; You

A relation of a fearful

know that none can call *Christ Jesus the Lord*, but by the holy Ghost : you must therefore think of your self, according to that soft affection, which you expresse in your prayers, infer-
aing thereby that God hath not wholly cast you off or bereaved you of his spirit utterly.

‘ I perceive, said *Spira*, that I call on him to my eternal damnation, for I tell you again, it is a new and unheard of example that you find in mee; If *Judas* (said they) had but outlived his days which by nature he might have done, he might have repented, and Christ would have received him to mercy; and yet he sinned most grievously against his Master which did so esteeme of him, as to honour him with the dignity of an Apostle, and did maintain
and

and feed him, Hee answered, Christ did also feed and honour me, neither yet is my fault one jot lesse then that of his; because it is noe more honour to be personally present with Christ in the flesh, then to be in his presence now by illumination of his holy Spirit; and besides I denie that ever *Judas* could have repented how long soever hee had lived; for grace was quite taken from him, as it is now from me.

O *Spira*, said they, you know you are in a spiritual desertion, you must therefore not believe what Satan suggests, hee was ever a Liar from the beginning and a meer Impostor, and will cast a thousand lying fancies into your mind, to beguile you withall; you must rather be-
C 3 lieve

A Relation of a feareful

evel it hose whom you judge to be in a good estate, and more able to discerne of you then your self: believe us, and wee tell you that God will be mercifull unto you.

Oh here is the knot (said *spira*) I would I could believe, but I cannot.

Then he began to reckon up what fearful dreams and visions he was continually troubled withall: that he saw the divels come flocking into the chamber, and about his bed terrifying him with strange noyses, that these were not fancies, but that he saw them as really, as the standers by: and that besides these outward terrors, he felt continually a racking torture of his minde, and a continuall butchery of his Conscience, being the very proper pangs

pangs of the damned wights in
nell.

Cast away these fancies (said
Gribouldus) these are but il-
lusions : humble your selfe in
the presence of God, and praise
him. ' The dead praise not
the Lord (answered he) nor
they that go down into the
pit ; wee that are drowned in
despair are dead, and already
gone down into the pit ; what
hell can there bee worse then
desparation ; or what great-
er punishment ? the gnaw-
ing worm, unquenchable fire,
horror, confusion, and (which
is worse then all) desparation
it self continually tortures mee
and now I count my present
estate worse, then if my soul
separated from my body
were with *Judas* and the rest
of the damned, and therefore,

‘now desire rather to be there
‘then thus to live in the body.

One being present repeated
certain words out of Psalmes
If thy Children forsake my
Law and walk not in my judg-
ments; I will visit their trans-
gressions with rods, and their
iniquity with stripes; never-
thelesse my loving kindnesse
wil not utterly take from them
nor suffer my faithfulnessse to
fail. mark this O *Spira*, my Co-
venant I will not break.

‘These promises (said *Spira*)
belong onely to the Elect
which if tempted, may fall in
to sin, but are again lifted up
and recovered out : as the
Prophet saith, though he fall,
hee shall not bee utterly cast
down, for the Lord uphold-
eth him, therefore *Peter* could
rise for he was elected, but
the

the reprobate when they shall
cannot rise again, as appeare
in *Cain, Saul* and *Judas*; God
deales one way with the Elect;
and another with Re probates.

The next day he prayed with
them in the Latin tongue, and
that with excellent affection, as
outwardly appeared, Blessed be
God, said *Vergerius*, these are
no signs of eternall reprobati-
on; you must not, O *Spira* seek
out the secret counsels of Gods
election and reprobation; for
no man can know, so long as
hee lives, whether by his good
or bad deeds, he be worthy of
Gods love or anger, doe you
not know that the Prophet *Da-
vid* complained that God had
cast off his soul,

— I know all this, quoth *Spira*, I
know the mercies of God are in-
finite & do surpasse the sins of
C 5 whole

A relation of the fearfull

whole world, and that they are essential to all that believe, but this faith, and this hope is the gift of God: O that he would give it me! but it is as impossible as to drink up the Sea at a draught: As for that of Solomon, if he had ever ~~that~~ that which I feel by wofull experience, he would never have spoken as he did, but the truth is never had mortall man such an evident experience of Gods anger and hatred against him, as I have; you that are in good estate, think repentance and faith to be work of great facility: and therefore you thinke it an easie matter to perswade a man to believe: the whole need not the Physician; and he that is well can soon give counsel to such as are ill: but this is the hell to me, my heart is hardened, I cannot believe; many are called but few are chosen.

Taf. 20

Upon what ground said
they do you conceive so ill an
opinion of your self.

‘I once did know God to be
my Father, not onely by crea-
tion, but by Regeneration; I
knew him by his beloved
Sonne the Author and Finisher
of our salvation; I could pray
to him, and hope for pardon
of sins from him: I had a taste
of his sweetnesse, peace & com-
fort; now contrarily, I know
God not as a Father, but as an
enemie; what more? my heart
hates God, and seekes to get
above him, I have nothing else
to flie to but terror and despair.

Belike you think then said
they that those who have the
earnest and first fruits of Gods
Spirit may not withstanding fall
away.

The Judgments of God are a
deep

deep abyss, said he, we are soon drownd if we enter into them, he that thinks he standeth let him take heed lest he fall ; as for my self I know I am fallen back and that I once did know the truth, though it may not be so thoroughly, I know not what to say, but that I am one of that number, which God hath threatned to tear in pieces.

Say not so, answered they, for God may come though at the last hour ; keep hold therefore at the least by hope.

This, *quoth he*, is my case, I tel you I cannot, God hath deprived me of hope, this brings terror to my mind, and Pines this bodie which now is soe weak as it cannot perform the several Offices thereof. for as the Elect have the Spirit testifying that they are the sons of
G d

God, so the Reprobates, even while they live do often feel a worme in their consciences, whereby they are condemned already: & therefore as I perceived this wound inflicted on my mind and will, I knew that I wanted the gifts of saving grace & that I was utterly undone, God chastneth his children with temporary afflictions, that they may come as gold out of the fire, but punisheth the wicked with blindness in their understandings & hardness of heart, & wo be to such from whom God takes his holy Spirit.

Here one rebuked him, and told him hee gave too much credit to sence, that he was not to believe himselfe, but rather him that was in a good estate; and I testifie to you (said he) that God will be merciful to you

Nay

Nay answered he, for because I am in this ill estate, therefore can I believe nothing but what is contrary to my salvation and comfort; but you that are so confident of your good Estate, looke that it be true, for it is no such small matter to be assured of sincerity; a man had need be exceedingly strongly grounded in the truth, before he can be able to affirm such a matter as you now do. It is not the performance of a few outward duties but a mighty constant labour, with all intention of heart and affection; with full desire and endeavour continually to set forth Gods glory; there must be neither fear of Legators, Inquisitors, prisons, nor any death whatsoever; many thinke themselves happy that are not; it is not every one that saith Lord, Lord, that shall go to heaven.

They

They came another day, and found him with his eyes shut, as if he had been drowzie and very loth to discourse, at which time there came in also a grave man from *Gittadella*, who demanded of *Spira*, if he knew him or not. He lifting up his eye-lids, and not suddenly remembering him, the man said to him, *I am Presbyter Antonie Fontamia*, I was with you at *Venice* some 8. weeks since; 'O cursed day, said *Spira*! O 'cursed day! Oh that I had never gone thither! Would God I had then dyed.

Afterwards came in a Priest, called *Bernardinus Sardonius*, bringing with him a book of Exorcisms to conjure this devell, whom when *Spira* saw, shaking his head he said.

'I am verily perswaded indeed

'That

'that God hath left me to the
 'power of the diuel: but such
 'they are, as are not to bee
 'found in your Letany; nei-
 'ther will they bee cast out by
 'spells. The Priest proceeding
 in his intended purpose, with a
 strange uncouth gesture, and a
 loud voice, adjured the spirit to
 come into *Spira's* tongue, & to
 answer: *Spira* deriding his fruit-
 lesse labour, with a sigh, turned
 from him, a Bishop being there
 present, said to *Spira*, brother,
 God hath put virtue into the
 Word and Sacraments; and we
 have used the one means, and
 had not that effect which wee
 desire; shall we try the efficacy
 of the Sacraments? surely if you
 take it, as a true Christian
 ought to receive the body and
 blood of Christ, it will prove
 a soveraign medicine for your
 sick soul.

• This

‘This I cannot do (answered he) for they that have no right to the promises, have no right to the seals. The Eucharist was appointed onely for believers, if we have not faith, wee eat & drink judgement to our selvs, I receiv’d it about a month since, but I did not wel in so doing; for I took it by constraint, & so I took it to my deeper condemnation.

Here *Vergerius* began to importune him earnestly to beware that hee did not wilfully resist grace, and put himselfe out of heaven, chargeing him vehemently, by all the Love that was between them, by the love that he bare to his children, yea to his owne soul; that he would set himself seriously to return to that Faith and hope, which once he had
in

in the death of Christ : with many such like words. *Spira* having heard much of the like matter formerly ; and being somewhat moved , said, You do but repeat, *Vergerius*, what should I hope? why should I believe? God hath taken faith from me; shew me then whither I shall go, shew me a Haven whereto I shall retire. You tell me of Gods mercy, when as God hath cast me off, you tel me of Christs intercession, I have denied him you comand me to believe, I say I cannot, you bring me no comfort, your comand is as impossible for me to obey as to keep Morall Law, if you should persuade one to love God with all his heart, soul & strength and God gives him not power, can he perform your desire? Do not the Church teach us to sing, *Di-*
rect

rect us, O Lord to love thy Com-
mandements: hypocrites say that
they love God with all their heart
but they lye; for my part I will
not lye, but tell you plainly; such
is my case, that though you should
never so much importune mee to
hope or believe, though I desire it
yet I cannot, for God as a punish-
ment of my wickednesse hath ta-
ken away from me all his saving
graces; faith, hope and all: I am
not the man therefore that you
take me for, belike you think I de-
light in this Estate, if I could
conceive but the least spark of
hope of a better Estate hereafter,
I would not refuse to endure the
most heavie weight of the wrath
of that great God, yea, for twenty
thousand years, so that I might at
length attaine to the end of that
misery, which I now know will
bee eternall, but I tell you, my
will

wil is wound, who longs more to believ, then I do? but all the ground-work of hope is gone, for if the Testimonies of holy Scripture be true (as they are certainly true) is not this as true whosoever denies mee before men, him, *saith Christ*, will I deny before my Father which is heaven? is not this justly my case as if it had bin intended against this very person of mine? And I pray you what shall become of such as Christ denyeth, seeing there is no other Name under heaven whereby you look to be saved? What saith *St. Paul* to the *Hebrews*? It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, & have tasted of the heavenly gift, & were partakers of the holy Ghost, if they fall away, to be renewed to repentance; what can be more plain
against

against me? Is not that Scripture also; If we sin willfully after we have received the knowledg. of truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, but a looking for of judgement, the Scripture speaks of me, *S. Paul* meets me, *Saint Peter* tells me, it had been better I had never knowne the way of righteousness, then after I have known, to turn from the holy Commandment, it had been better I had not know, & yet then my condemnation had been most certain; do you not see evidently, that I have wilfully denied the known truth; I may justly expect not onely damnation, but worse if worse may be imagine. God will have mee undergoc the just punishment of my sin, and make me an example of his wrath for your sakes.

The

The Company present admired his discourse, so grievously accusing himselfe of his fore-past life, so gravely and wisely deliating concerning the judgements of God, that they then were convinced, that it was not frenzy or madnesse that had possessed him, and being as it were in admiration of his Estate, *Spira* proceeded again in this manner. 'Take heed to yourselves, it is noe light or easie matter to bee a Christian, it is not Baptisme or reading of the Scriptures, or boasting of faith in Christ though even these are good that can prove one to bee an absolute Christian, you know what I said before, there must bee a conformity in life. A Christian must bee strong unconquerable, not carrying

an obscure profession, but resolute, expressing the image of Christ, and holding out against all opposition to the last breath he must give all diligence, by Righteousnesse and holinesse, to make his calling and election sure; many there are that snatch at the promises in the Gospel, as if they undoubtedly did belong to them, and yet they remain sluggish, and carelesse, and being flattered by the things of this present world they passe in their course in quietnesse and security, as if they were the onely happy men; whom neverthelesse the Lord in his providence hath ordain'd to eternal wrath; as you may see in Saint Lukes Rich Man. Thus it was with me; Therefore take ye heed.

Then

Then came one of his Nephews, and offered him some sustenance, which he disdainfully refusing, so moved the young mans chollar, that hee charged him with hypocrisie & dissimulation, or frenzy; to whom *spira* gravely answering, said,

You may interpret the matter as you will: but I am sure I am not onely the Actor, but the Argument and matter of the Tragidy; I would it were frenzy either fained or true, for if it were frenzy I could put it off at pleasure; if it were a real frenzy, yet there were some hope left of Gods mercy, where as now there is none. For I know God hath pronounced me an enemy, and guilty of high treason against his Majesty; I am a cast-away, a vassall
of

of wrath: yet dare you call it dissembling and frenzie; and can mock at the formidable example of the heavy wrath of God, that should teach you fear and terror: But it is natural to the flesh, either out of malice or ignorance, to speak perversely of the works of God. The natural man discerneth not of the things that are of God, because they are spiritually discerned.

How can this be (said Gri-baudus) that you can thus excellently discourse of the judgments of God, and of the graces of his holy Spirit, that you finde the want of them, and earnestly desire them; and yet you think you are utterly deprived of them.

Take this for certain (saith he) want the main grace of all, and that which is absolutely necessary and God doth many times extort

A relation of a fearful

*most true and strange testimonies
of his majestie, justice and mercie;
yea, out of the mouthes of very
reprobates for even Judas, after
he had betraied his Master, was
constrained to confess his sin, &
to justifie the innocency of Christ;
and therefore if I do the like, it
is no new or strange matter. God
hath taken faith from me, & left
me other common gifts, for my
deeper condemnation: By how
much the more I remember what
I had, and hear others discourse
of what they have by so much the
more is my torment, in that I
know what I want, and how there
is no way to be relieved.*

*Thus spake he, the tears all
the while trickling down;
dressing that his pangs were
such, as that the damned
weights in hell endure not the
like misery: that his estate was
worse*

worse then that of Cain or Judas, and therefore he desired to die. Yet behold (saith he) the scriptures are accomplish'd in me they shall desire to die, and death shall fly from them. And verily, he seemed exceedingly to fear, least his life should bee drawn out to a longer thred; and finding no ease or rest, ever and anon, cried out O miserable wretch, O miserable wretch; then turning to the Company, he besought them in this manner;

O Brethren! take a diligent heed to your life; make more account of the gifts of God's Spirit then I have done; learn to beware my misery; think not you are assured Christians, because you understand something of the Gospel; take heed you grow not secure on that ground; be constant and im-

moverble in the maintenance of your profession: Confess even until death, if you be called thereto; He that loveth father, mother, brother, sisters, sons, daughters, kindred, houses, lands more then Christ is not worthie of him.

These words (said they) do not sound like the words of a wicked Reprobate.

I do but here imitate (saith Spira) the rich Glutton in the Gospel, who though in hell, yet was careful, that his brethren should not come to that place of torment: and I say to you Brethren, take heed of this miserable estate wherein I am:

Then turning himself to certain young men that were present, he desired them to conceive him aright. 'I do not speak this to derogate from the certainty of saving faith, and the promises

'promises of the Gospel, for
'they are most sure; but take
'heed of relying on that
'faith that works not a ho-
'ly & unblameable life, worthy
'of a believer; credit me it will
fail, I have tried it, I presumed I
'had gotten the right faith; I
'preached it to others, I had all
'places of Scripture in memory
'that might support it, I thought
'my self sure, and in the mean
'time living impiously & care-
'lessly, behold, now the judge-
'ments of God have overtaken
'me; not to correction, but to
'condemnation: and now you
'would have me to believe, but
'it will not be, for I fell too late
'that good things belong only
'to such as are good, whose sins
'are covered with Christs death
'and blood, as with a vail, and
'guarded with his righteous
D S merits

A relation of the fearfull

'metits from the flood of Gods
 'wrath, even as with a mighty
 'wall, least miserable mortals
 'should be swallowed up with
 'greatnesse of their sin: but as
 'for me, I have as it were, wil-
 'fully with my hands pulled
 'down this Rampire, behind
 'which I might have rested in
 'safety, and now are the swell-
 'ling waters come even to my
 'soul, and I am cast away.

One of his familiar friends
 chanced to say, That certainly
 he was overcome with melan-
 cholly, which being over-heard
 Spira answered.

*Well, be it so, seeing you will
 needs have it so; thus also is Gods
 wrath manifested against me, in
 that he hath taken from me the
 use of mine Understanding and
 Reason, so as I can neither rightly
 esteeme and judg of my distemper,
 nor*

nor hope of redmedy: You see Brethren, what a dangerous thing it is, to stop or stay in things that concern Gods glory; especially to dissemble upon any terms: What a fearful thing is it, to be near & almost a Christian? Never was the like example to this of mine, and therefore, if you be wise, you will seriously consider thereof. O that God would let loose his hand from me, that it were with me now as in times past, I would scorn the threats of the most cruel Tyrants, bear torments with invincible resolution, and glory in the outward profession of Christ till I were chaaked in the flame, & my body consumed to ashes.

You say you are desperate; O Spira! (said they)! why then do you not strive with some weapon or other, violently to make an end of your life, as

A relation of the fearful

desperate men use to do? Let me have a sword (said Spira) Why what would you do with it (quoth they)? I cannot tell you (said he) what this minde would move me to, upon occasion, nor what I would do.

They perceiving small effect of all this their labour, but rather that he grew worse, For the avoiding of concourse of people; for every day seldome fewer then twenty continued with him, and to stop the course of fame, which was continually blown abroad of him; they consult to carry him back again into his own Country; and those his friends that came to comfort him, began to take their leaves of him, Vergerius amongst the rest, required that at their parting they might pray together with him

him, Spira hardly consented, and as unwillingly performed, For he said, My heart is estranged from God, I cannot call him Father from my heart; all good motions are now quite gone, my heart is full of malediction, hatred and blasphemy against God: I finde I grow more and more hardened in heart, and cannot stoop nor help myself Your prayers for me shall turn to your own benefit, they can do me no good.

Vergerius came to take his leave of him, whom Spira embracing, said, Although I know that nothing can bring any benefit to me a Reprobate; but that every thing shall tend to my deeper condemnation: yet I give you most hearty thanks, for your kind office of love and good will; and the Lord return it unto
you

you, with a plentiful increase of all good.

The next day being brought down to his intended journey, by the way looking round about him with a ghastly look, he saw a knife lying on a table, to which he running hastily, snatched hold of, as intending to mischief himself; but his friends laying hold of him, stopped him in his purpose: whereupon with indignation he said, *I would I were above God, for I know he will have no mercy on me.*

Thus went he homewards, often saying, that hee envied the condition of *Cain* and *Judas*: He lay about eight weeks in this case, in a continual burning, neither desiring, nor receiving any thing but by force, and that without digestion.

ffion so spent, that he appeared a perfect Anatomic: expressing to the view nothing but sinews and bones: vehemently raging for drink, ever pining, yet fearful to live long, dreadful of Hell, yet coveting death, in a continual torment, yet his own tormentor. And thus consuming himself with grief and horror, impatience and despair, like a living man in Hell; he represented an extraordinary example of the justice and power of God. And thus (as far as appeareth) within a few daies after his arrival at his own home, hee departed this present life. Yet an occasion to make us remember, *That secret things belong unto the Lord our God, but charity to man, to teach him to hope all things.*

E I N I S.

